

Presidential Candidates, briefing

Executive Registry

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3 August 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Pursuant to your directive, I briefed Senator John F. Kennedy on Saturday, July 23, and Senator Lyndon B. Johnson on Thursday, July 28, at their respective residences, at Hyannis Port, Massachusetts and at the Johnson Ranch in Texas. Each briefing covered slightly over two hours and the candidates were alone with me throughout the briefing.

The two briefings covered the same general subject matter; namely, recent developments in Sino-Soviet policy; an analysis of Soviet strategic attack capabilities in missiles and long-range bombers and of Soviet nuclear testing prior to the moratorium and the background of the RB-47 incident. This was followed by developments in the Berlin situation, in Cuba and the Congo and in other strategically important areas including the Middle East, Iran, the Formosa Straits, and Communist China; also NATO problems and France and Algeria.

Both candidates were particularly interested in developments that might arise during the campaign, particularly with regard to Berlin, Cuba, and the Congo.

Following the briefing on Soviet missile developments, Senator Kennedy asked how we ourselves stood in the missile race. I replied that the Defense Department was the competent authority on this question and the Senator remarked that he hoped to see Secretary Gates and also expressed a desire to have a talk with Secretary Herter. I said that I would mention this to you which I had the opportunity of doing at the NSC Meeting on Monday, July 25.

Senator Kennedy also asked my opinion as to the likelihood of an early attack on the Offshore Islands in the Taiwan Straits and inquired about the present status of the Nuclear Test Conference. He said he desired to have another briefing when he returned to Washington.

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Senator Johnson, in addition to his particular interest in Soviet missile development, gave particular attention to developments in the Caribbean, including Mexico.

In reply to my inquiry as to whether he expected to have any meetings of his Preparedness Subcommittee when Congress reconvened, Senator Johnson said he did not think it was likely unless the issue of important additional defense expenditures came before the Congress.

Both candidates made brief statements to the press following the briefings. Senator Kennedy was informal, expressing appreciation for the briefing. Senator Johnson read a short statement which he showed to me before he read it. A copy is appended.

Respectfully yours,

SIGNED

Allen W. Dulles
Director

Enclosure

AWD/ji

1 - DCI

1 - DDCI

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Statement by Senator Lyndon B. Johnson - July 28, 1960
(no place of issue, but it was issued at the LBJ Ranch, Johnson City, Texas.)

Mr. Dulles and I have had a frank and fruitful discussion of many of the key international problems facing America today.

We covered the major trouble spots in the world and the latest information available to our intelligence sources.

While this meeting was arranged at the suggestion of the President, it is not a new experience for me. Mr. Dulles and I have had many prior discussions and meetings of a similar nature in relation to my responsibilities as Senate Majority Leader and Chairman of the Senate Aeronautical and Space Sciences Committee. Naturally, this information is of a highly classified nature. I do not intend to go into matters which are properly the subject of security.

But I think it should be made crystal clear to the masters of the Communist world that there is no division in America when it comes to the question of Communism, however vigorous the forthcoming campaign may be and however sharp the language that may be used from time to time, both parties are absolutely united in their determined opposition to Communism.

For that reason I believe these briefings have a distinct value. They give us a common front of knowledge upon which to draw and they act as a symbol of the fact that in the United States, political activity is a method of selecting our leadership and not of tearing our country to pieces.

One thing is clear to all Americans, simply from the events of the past weeks and months, that is the simple fact that nothing has occurred to abate the Communist threat to the peace of the Free World, or to give any justification for complacency -- either by the Government or by the American people.

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